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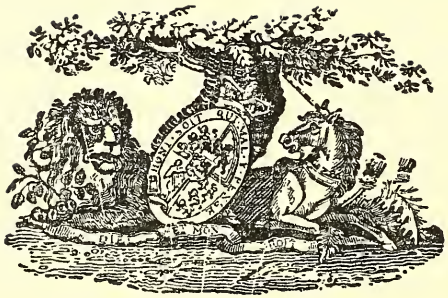
Marcus Whitman
(1802-1847)
—*his Courage, his Deeds, and his College*

CHESTER COLLINS MAXEY



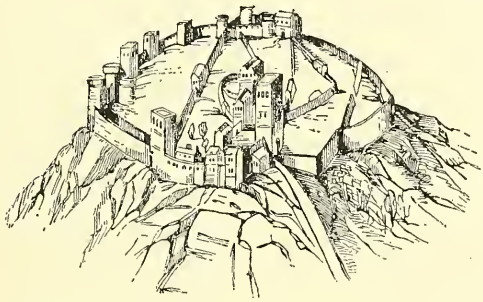
"Were American Newcomen to do naught else, our work is well done if we succeed in sharing with America a strengthened inspiration to continue the struggle towards a nobler Civilization— through wider knowledge and understanding of the hopes, ambitions, and deeds of leaders in the past who have upheld Civilization's material progress. As we look backward, let us look forward."

—CHARLES PENROSE
Senior Vice-President for North America
The Newcomen Society of England

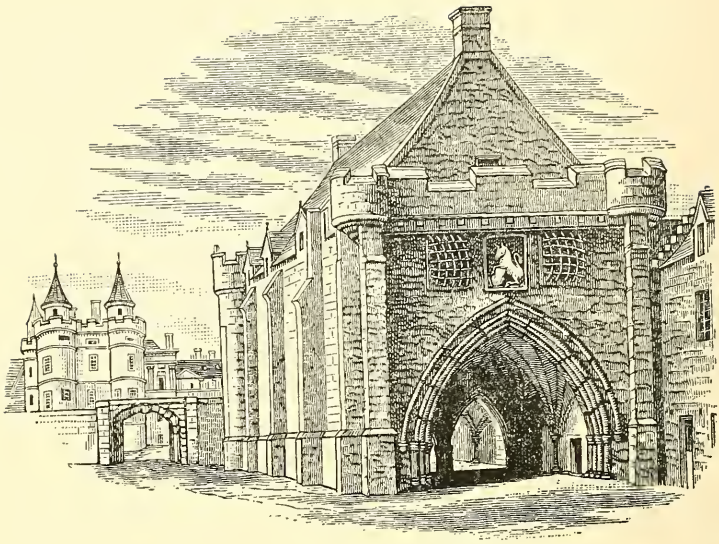
This statement, crystallizing a broad purpose of the Society, was first read at the Newcomen Meeting at New York World's Fair on August 5, 1939, when American Newcomen were guests of The British Government

"Actorum Memores simul affectamus Agenda"

MARCUS WHITMAN (1802-1847) —*his Courage, his Deeds, and his Whitman College*
A Saga of the Northwest



AMERICAN NEWCOMEN, *through the years, has honored numerous universities and colleges in the United States of America and Canada, and has honored the memories of courageous pioneers whose vision, energy, determination, unceasing effort, and abiding Faith laid the foundations upon which were reared educational institutions that have contributed to the intellectual and spiritual development of vast areas. Such a Newcomen manuscript is this dealing with the life and work and times of an amazing pioneer—a man whose memory forever will be cherished as a Builder of the Pacific Northwest, where Whitman College stands today as a monument to him and to his very wonderful wife, both of whom sacrificed their lives that America might go forward in a glorious Conquest of the Great West!*



"So long as men admire unfaltering courage, so long as men prize individual initiative and self-reliance, so long as men wonder about the eternal paradoxes of human behavior, so long as men are moved by the pathos of inexorable tragedy, and so long as men exalt consecration to the service of God and man, so long, my friends, will the story of Marcus and Narcissa Whitman be cherished and repeated."

—Chester Collins Maxey

Marcus Whitman
(1802-1847)
—*his Courage, his Deeds, and his College*

CHESTER COLLINS MAXEY
MEMBER OF THE NEWCOMEN SOCIETY
PRESIDENT
WHITMAN COLLEGE
WALLA WALLA
WASHINGTON

THE NEWCOMEN SOCIETY IN NORTH AMERICA
NEW YORK SAN FRANCISCO MONTREAL
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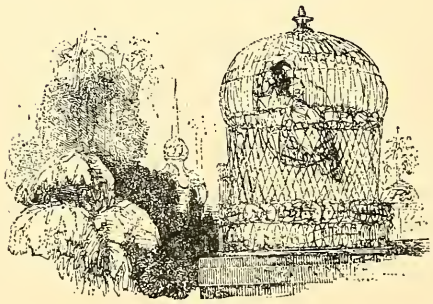

This Newcomen Address, dealing with the life and times and amazing deeds of Marcus Whitman (1802-1847) and with the beginnings of Whitman College, was delivered at the "1950 Inland Empire Dinner" of The Newcomen Society of England, held at Davenport Hotel, in Spokane, Washington, U.S.A., when Dr. Maxey was the guest of honor, on June 9, 1950

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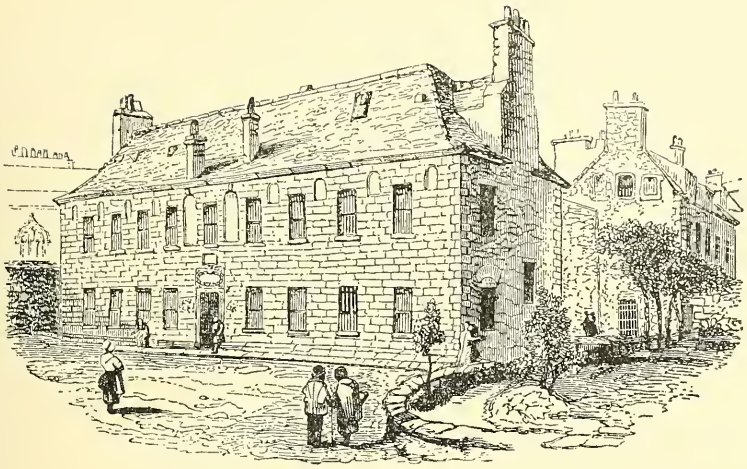


"The Marcus and Narcissa Whitman who particularly interest me were not alabaster saints or sanctimonious bigots. True, they did aspire to be saints and were dogmatic in their religious beliefs, but not all their pietism could erase the ingrained traits of personality which made them intensely and fascinatingly human. It is the testimony of all who knew them, those who disliked as well as those who adored them, that Marcus and Narcissa Whitman were not ordinary people. They had qualities that set them apart—not alone qualities of religious fervor, but qualities of human strength and frailty, of human wisdom and folly, of human greatness and pettiness, of human charm and repulsion, of human genius and ineptitude."

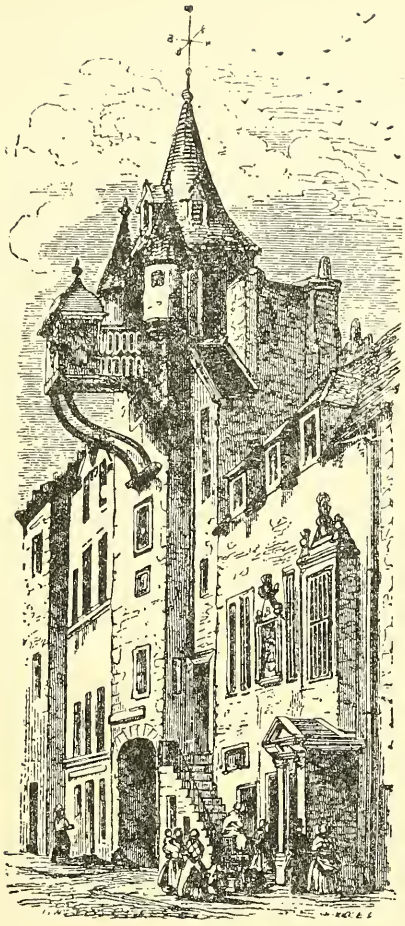
—Chester Collins Maxey

APR 1 1 1969

Biographical Sketch of The Author

A garden spot amid stern glory of the Pacific Northwest, the renowned and fertile Walla Walla Valley, stretching away on the east to the Blue Mountains, snowcaps of the State of Washington, forms a dramatic natural setting of equally dramatic lives of two frontier pioneers of highest courage and highest purpose. This great Walla Walla Valley, rich today in its crops and its fruits, its livestock and poultry, its agriculture and its husbandry; this valley —made superb by Walla Walla River swift-running between tree-lined banks on an appointed journey to the mighty Columbia and thence to the Pacific Ocean—is in itself a living and ever-productive monument to the lives and deeds of these two pioneers of courage of just a century ago: MARCUS WHITMAN (1802-1847) *and his devoted wife,* NARCISSA WHITMAN (1808-1847). *Verily were they like trees planted by the waterside that will bring forth fruit in due season—because they were of the household of Faith! The strength of their very hills showed in their lives and manifold works. Today, Whitman College at Walla Walla memorializes them. None better in the great Inland Empire of eastern Washington could tell this amazing recital than* CHESTER COLLINS MAXEY, *Ph.D., LL.D., seventh President of Whitman College and the first Whitman alumnus to occupy that post. Native of the State of Washington, Dr. Maxey graduated at Whitman in the Class of 1912. Took his master's degree at University of Wisconsin, in 1914; and his doctorate at Columbia University, in 1919. Holds his Phi Beta Kappa key. Began teaching, in Political Science, at Oregon Agricultural College, in 1914. Taught at Western Reserve University; and, since 1925, has been Professor of Political Science at Whitman College. Became its President in 1948. Has written 13 books. His "The American Problem of Government," the 5th edition of which appeared in 1948, is widely used in colleges and universities. Has served on Executive Council of American Political Science Association. Has recently been honored by creation of a fund: The Chester C. Maxey Prize Fund at Whitman College. Educator, college president, author, lecturer, editor, student of Americanism, good citizen, Dr. Maxey is a beloved member of the Inland Empire Committee, in The Newcomen Society of England.*

HIS MARK



My fellow members of Newcomen:

HERE appropriately in the Inland Empire, I am privileged at Spokane this evening to bring you another version of a story that has become a part of the folklore of the American People. It is a story that has been told many times and told from widely differing points of view. So long as men admire unfaltering courage, so long as men prize individual initiative and self-reliance, so long as men wonder about the eternal paradoxes of human behavior, so long as men are moved by the pathos of inexorable tragedy, and so long as men exalt consecration to the service of God and man, so long, my friends, will the story of Marcus and Narcissa Whitman be cherished and repeated.

As some have told it, the Whitman story is mainly an epic in the history of Christian missions among the American Indians; as some have told it, the story is primarily a saga of the covered wagon and the heroic pioneering of the Oregon Trail; as some have told it, the story could have been hatched in Hollywood with a special eye to the patriotic trade; and as some have told it, the Whitman story is a fabrication cleverly designed to mislead the unwary and glorify the undeserving. None of these versions is in my mind tonight. Rather, I wish to vary the perspective and give you what I deem to be a truer and far more human Whitman story.

The Marcus and Narcissa Whitman who particularly interest me were not alabaster saints or sanctimonious bigots. True, they did aspire to be saints and were dogmatic in their religious beliefs, but not all their pietism could erase the ingrained traits of personality which made them intensely and fascinatingly human. It is the testimony of all who knew them, those who disliked as well as those who adored them, that Marcus and Narcissa Whitman were not ordinary people. They had qualities that set them apart—not alone qualities of religious fervor, but qualities of human strength and frailty, of human wisdom and folly, of human greatness and pettiness, of human charm and repulsion, of human genius and ineptitude.

There has been no other couple like the Whitmans in American history—no wooing more strange, no wedding more extraordinary, no marriage more proof against stress and storm, no union of purpose and effort more perfect, no failure more pathetic, no ending more terrible, and no immortality more sublime than theirs. Forces they did not control or understand brought their lives together in a noble enterprise that failed; forces they did not control or understand brought their lives to a dire and agonizing close; yet so greatly did they live, so magnificently did they labor and serve that forces they set in motion will forever enrich the civilization they helped to plant on the western slopes of the Continental Divide.

Marcus Whitman was born at Rushville, New York, on September 4, 1802, and met death at the hands of a maddened band of Cayuse Indians at the Waiilatpu Mission, about six miles southwest

of the present city of Walla Walla, Washington, on November 29, 1847. The first thirty-three years of his life were spent in small rural communities of western New York and the Berkshire region of Massachusetts. There he obtained all of his schooling, all of his religious training, all of his medical instruction, and all of his practical experience in life. Narcissa Prentiss was born at Prattsburg, New York, just a few miles from the birthplace of her future husband, on March 14, 1808, and shared his martyrdom at Waiilatpu in 1847. She grew up in the same social environment and had much the same background of education and experience as Marcus Whitman.

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The first half of the Nineteenth Century was a period of profound transition for the United States of America. East of the Mississippi the country was rapidly filling up. Great cities were springing into being, almost overnight it seemed. Industrialization was speeding forward at a headlong pace in the North, and the plantation system founded on slave labor was grimly fastening itself upon the South.

Urban America was aquiver with new developments, new technologies, new populations, new ideas, and new ambitions. Such bounding growth, such prodigious expansion of things material, never before had been the portion of any people. The prospect seemed immeasurable. What could stay the extension of American commerce, the onward march of American industry, the endless soaring of American population, the continental advance of the American nation? Just one thing, said the public diviners, and one thing only—the failure of the American people to perceive and grasp their God-given opportunity to expand. So, with a single voice, time and circumstance united in the stirring anthem of expansionism.

Rural America had not as yet been so heavily touched by the provocative hand of change. Village and country life still savored of the Eighteenth Century. The great agrarian revolution was still to come. Emotionally the rural population could be moved to great depths by only one force—impassioned religion. Yet rural America was no less expansionistic than urban America. There was no longer

land for all. In the North, population was outrunning tillable acreage; and, in the South, the slave economy was expropriating the small proprietor. And to these causes of rural unrest was added the catalyzing fervor of a missionary evangelism which fifty years of backwoods revivalism had raised to sweeping dimensions.

West of the Mississippi lay half a continent, empty of all the accustomed appurtenances of civilization. To eastern America it was a land of fable and fancy where, beyond the Great Stony Mountains, could be found the happy valleys of the heart's desire. It was a land of wonders and tall tales, but a land unknown. Peopled it was, though sparsely and by men of a stone-age culture. Its soil scarcely cloven by the plow; its great spaces traversed only by the Red Man, the explorer, the trapper, and the voyageur; its riches ungathered; its boundaries undetermined and its ownership unsettled, there it lay—to the fearful, a threat; to the adventurous, a challenge; to the covetous, an invitation; and to the visionary, a call.

As the Nineteenth Century moved into its third decade a mighty convergence of social forces set in. Land hunger, commercial avidity, herd restlessness, political expediency, and evangelical zeal, as though responding to a maestro's beat, caught the tempo of the time and began a trend westward. America was poised for another vast surge of empire. But of this, Marcus Whitman and Narcissa Prentiss, going their separate ways in the prosaic routine of neighboring villages in western New York, knew nothing. Vaguely they must have sensed the primordial rhythms of their time, as multitudes of others did; but of the cosmic forces which were to unite their lives as participants in events of imperial magnitude, these two who were all but strangers to the day of their betrothal, could not have known or dreamed. They only knew, each independently of the other, that their hearts had felt a summons to serve the cause of Christ in faraway places.

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Early in 1834, Marcus Whitman, a young country doctor of Wheeler, New York, volunteered his services to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. For eight years he had been pounding the primitive roads of rural New York as a medical practitioner, and the rewards had not been gratifying,

materially or spiritually, for Marcus Whitman was a restless man, always and in every sense of the term. A man of titanic physique, of dynamic energy, and of driving purpose, he must be forever up and doing, forever battling opposition, forever crashing forward to a goal. Now thirty-two years of age, he was troubled about his health, troubled about his soul, troubled in divers ways as men of action always are when life has settled to a dull routine.

Owing to a overwhelming religious experience in early youth, Marcus Whitman had aspired to be a Christian minister, but circumstances had conspired to defeat this ambition and deflect him to the study and practice of medicine. But he still had a feeling of frustration, still yearned to teach and preach. Living in what then was religiously the most highly sensitized area in the United States, and being intensely religious himself, Marcus Whitman could not shake the conviction that he had missed his true vocation. The next best thing was to find a place in the missionary field where he could combine the ministry of healing with that of Christian evangelism. Hence his offer to the American Board, a joint enterprise of the Congregational, Presbyterian, Dutch Reformed, and German Reformed churches. Where he was sent did not matter much; what he wanted was action—immediate and all-absorbing action in the service of Christ.

Marcus Whitman, as always, was in a hurry, but the American Board was not. It was not wholly sure of his qualifications and there was no mission station to which he could be immediately dispatched. But finally, in January 1835, Whitman received notice that he had been appointed and authorized by the American Board to organize a mission to the Nez Perce and Flathead Indians beyond the Rocky Mountains and to go himself as a missionary physician. For this appointment he was indebted to The Reverend Samuel Parker.

In November 1834, The Reverend Samuel Parker, a Congregational minister, engaged in raising money for the support of missions, went through western New York holding meetings. In his audience at Wheeler, New York, was Dr. Marcus Whitman. At the close of the meeting the two were introduced, and Whitman told Parker of his as yet unsuccessful application to the American Board. Knowing that Parker was a man of wide acquaintance and influence in church circles, Whitman besought his assistance. Parker

at the moment was promoting the cause of missions to the Indians beyond the Rocky Mountains, and Whitman expressed his readiness and eagerness to undertake such a mission. Parker agreed to plead Whitman's cause with the Board, and the strong letters of recommendation that he wrote reveal that Marcus Whitman had impressed him most favorably.

A few days later Parker spoke at Angelica, New York, and had among his hearers a twenty-six-year-old school teacher named Narcissa Prentiss. Narcissa too was a restless person. Since her sixteenth year, when she experienced rapturous religious awakening, her mind had been set on becoming a missionary. But there had been no opportunity for a single woman, and Narcissa had not been interested in marriage. After hearing Parker's appeal for missionaries to the Flatheads and Nez Perces, Narcissa immediately offered her services. Parker had to tell her there was little chance for her to go. The American Board wanted single men or married couples; unmarried females were certain to be refused. Thereupon the Reverend Samuel Parker learned, as scores of others were to learn, that Miss Narcissa Prentiss was not an easy person to refuse. She had a mind of her own and a tongue to match it—not the tongue of a shrew but the tongue of an extraordinarily intelligent and beautiful woman. The Reverend Samuel Parker was impressed —and charmed. Before him stood a tall, voluptuously formed, blue-eyed, golden-haired, fine-featured woman whose words had the cadence of song and the eloquence of a superior mind. Narcissa Prentiss was not taking Mr. Parker's "No" as the final answer. At least he must present her name to the American Board. Would he do that? He would, and did.

Marcus Whitman and Narcissa Prentiss at this time were acquaintances but no more. They dwelt in neighboring villages but had seen little of one another. In connection with his church work and perhaps also as a medical practitioner, Whitman had come to know the Prentiss family, but his meetings with Narcissa had been few, since she lived most of the time away from home on account of her teaching duties. Separately the two had heard the call to save heathen souls, separately they had become interested in the Nez Perce mission, and separately their lives might have continued had it not been for the good offices of The Reverend Samuel Parker.

The Reverend Samuel Parker was not engaged in Cupid's business. He was a recruiting sergeant for the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, but he was not averse to a little matchmaking for the glory of the Lord. Marcus Whitman had impressed him as a superb prospect for the mission field, and Whitman had told Parker that though he was now unmarried and had no plans in that regard he might wish to take a wife if he were appointed to a mission station. Narcissa Prentiss was an equally outstanding prospect for missionary work, but unmarried females could not be accepted. Suppose, however, Brother Whitman and Sister Prentiss should marry. Then Brother Whitman would have the wife and helpmate he needed in the mission field; Sister Prentiss would be able to realize her most cherished ambition; the American Board would have enlisted the services of two exceptionally able people; and thus the work of the Lord would be prospered and promoted. So The Reverend Samuel Parker, not being a man to let grass grow beneath his feet, sat down and wrote Marcus Whitman a letter. Did he want a wife in case he should receive an appointment from the American Board? Why not consider the lovely and pious Miss Prentiss who was eating her heart out because she could not be a missionary? Better make haste and call on her at her father's house where she was temporarily residing during the school vacation.

Marcus Whitman did not make haste—perhaps the only time in his life when he did not. If he were not to be a missionary he might not want a wife. So he calmly waited until he heard from the American Board in January 1835, that his application had been approved. Sure then of his status, he went at once to Narcissa, proposed marriage, was accepted, and the next day left for St. Louis to join Parker in an expedition to reconnoiter the Indian country west of the Rockies and select a suitable site for the mission. Not love, but missionary business was uppermost in his mind; and the same must have been true of Narcissa, for on the day of Whitman's departure she wrote her letter of application to the American Board, knowing that the Board would be informed in supplementary letters from others of her plans to marry Dr. Whitman. This time the Board was prompt. In three weeks Narcissa had her appointment.

Had romance ever had a place in the lives of Marcus Whitman and Narcissa Prentiss? As to Whitman we do not know. There is an unsubstantiated tale that he had been married some years before, but no corroborating evidence has ever been produced. Of Narcissa the record speaks more fully. Marcus Whitman was not the first suitor for her hand. There had been others and they had been rejected, among them her childhood schoolmate Henry Harmon Spalding. There is no evidence that Narcissa rejected Spalding in favor of Whitman—no evidence that she even knew Whitman at the time she turned Spalding down—but Henry Harmon Spalding was not a man who could easily forget, and the time was soon to come when he would play a tragic role in the affairs of Marcus Whitman and Narcissa Prentiss.

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The Reverend Samuel Parker may have preened himself on the betrothal of Marcus Whitman and Narcissa Prentiss. It was indeed a clever stroke of business in a wonderful cause. But The Reverend Samuel Parker did not deserve all the credit. Though he probably knew it not, he was an agent of forces greater than himself and greater than the American Board. On March 1, 1833, the *Christian Advocate and Journal* of New York contained an article which profoundly stirred the conscience of Protestant America. With more sentimentality than historical accuracy, the article described the long and pathetic journey of four members of the Flathead and Nez Perce tribes to St. Louis in search of the White Man's Book of Heaven. Alas, said the author of the article, this noble quest for the truth of God had been in vain. Two of the emissaries had died, and the remaining two had turned their steps homeward with heavy hearts. They had not been given the Book of Heaven; instead they had been shown a form of worship with candles and images in which there was no healing for their souls. The Presbyterians and the Congregationalists along with other leading Protestant sects were fired to instant action. In 1833 they were aware, as they would not have been ten years before, of two things: *(1)* the growing intensity of the Anglo-American dispute over the ownership of the Oregon country; *(2)* the rising strength of Roman Catholicism in the United States of America.

Since the renewal of the joint occupation treaty in 1828 Oregon had been much in the news, and a Macedonian cry from the Indians of Oregon was sure of attention. Did Christian America have nothing better to offer these benighted souls than the "dry husks of papalism"? Protestant sects could not ignore such a challenge. Immediate steps were taken, not only by the American Board, but by various other Protestant missionary agencies, to establish mission stations among the Indians in the valley of the Columbia River. Among the first to volunteer his services to the American Board for this purpose was The Reverend Samuel Parker. In the Spring of 1834, he and two associates, with the permission of the Board, had set out for the Rocky Mountains but had arrived too late to travel with the fur-trade caravan of that year. Since there was no other safe and sure way of making the trip, Parker had returned to New York and busied himself in fund-raising and recruiting for 1835.

In the raising of funds he had been fairly successful, but recruits who could meet the exacting standards of the American Board had not been easy to find. Marcus Whitman and Narcissa Prentiss were not enough, so it was decided to abandon the plan to send out a mission party in 1835. Instead Parker and Whitman obtained the consent of the Board to make a reconnaissance trip, establish contact with the Nez Perces, and determine the best location for the mission station. They hastened to St. Louis early in the Spring of 1835 and joined the fur-trade caravan led by the renowned Lucian Fontanelle. On this trip Whitman found his true vocation. The moment he struck the trail westward he ceased to be a tenderfoot. No man ever learned the craft of the frontiersman faster or better; no man ever had a greater natural genius for meeting the emergencies of travel across the unsettled plains and mountains of the American West; and no man had greater versatility in situations where action —prompt and unerring action—was imperative. Not only could Whitman hold his own with the best of the mountain men when it came to riding a horse, killing and dressing a buffalo, taking a team and wagon across a swollen stream, cooking a meal by camp fire, and scouting the trail; he could also perform a difficult surgical operation, set broken bones, compound medicines, nurse the sick, preach a sermon, and read the burial service for the dead. Missionary though he was, devout and straightlaced, Whitman won the

ungrudging admiration and affection of Jim Bridger, Tom Fitzpatrick, Lucian Fontanelle, Joe Meek, and scores of other fur traders and mountain men who came to know him. His piety they could not comprehend, but in all other respects they knew him as one of their own kind—a man unafraid, a man of deeds, a man who could take care of himself and others no matter what the odds, a man of iron endurance, a man who never shirked or complained, and a man with a boisterous laugh when laughter was in order.

Contact with a large band of Nez Perces was made when the caravan reached the rendezvous at the Green River. Parker and Whitman learned that the Indians would welcome the missionaries to their country and give them full protection and cooperation. This raised a question. Should they go on west with the Indians or return home and organize a fully staffed mission party for the following year. Parker, who for more than a year had been spoiling to get west of the mountains, was determined to go on; but he insisted that Whitman turn back with the caravan and spend the Winter of 1835-36 in spadework for the mission of 1836.

Whitman hastened home, but did not hasten to marry. He was too busy for romance, too busy for more than a brief call at the Prentiss home. There were a thousand things to do and only six weeks to get them done, if the party was to be in St. Louis in time to depart with the fur-trade caravan of 1836. Along with a host of other tasks, Whitman had to find an ordained minister willing to accompany the mission who was also acceptable to the American Board. This proved to be a real stumbling block. Whitman earnestly solicited the services of several desirable men, but for one reason or another all were unable or unready to accept. At last he was reduced to Hobson's choice. He knew of one minister who could and would go—none other than Henry Harmon Spalding, the former schoolmate and rejected suitor of Narcissa Prentiss. Whitman offered the appointment to Spalding and Spalding promptly accepted.

How much Whitman knew about Spalding is uncertain. He must have known that Narcissa had rejected Spalding as a suitor, but that was an old affair. Spalding had now been married to Eliza Hart for nearly two years and might be presumed to have made a good recovery from whatever heartbreak he had suffered at Nar-

cissa's refusal. Moreover, Whitman had not been a rival for Narcissa's hand, had not become betrothed to her until after Spalding had been married a year or more, and even yet Whitman was not married to her. How could Spalding harbor any feelings against him, or Narcissa either, for that matter? It is doubtful if Whitman paused long enough even to weigh such a question in his mind. He was in a desperate hurry; his own heart was untroubled by the tender passion; he knew that Spalding was an able and well-trained minister; and the main thing, after all, as he saw it—as Marcus Whitman always saw it—was to get on with the job. Whitman was right about Spalding's ability—he was to prove in some respects to be an abler man than Whitman himself—but it was a great misfortune for the mission that Whitman was not a better psychologist. If he could have understood, even dimly, the emotional turmoils of Henry Harmon Spalding, Whitman would have perceived that naught but anguish could come from any association that would bring him into contact again with Narcissa Prentiss.

Arrangements for the appointment of Spalding were concluded on February 14, 1836. Whitman then proceeded at once to Angelica, New York, where he and Narcissa were wed on February 18. Thus was sealed one of the strangest marriages and thus began one of the most beautiful love stories in the annals of America. Writing about their marriage some months later, Narcissa said: "We had to make love somewhat abruptly, and must do our courting now we are married." It was the literal truth. Missionary zeal, not love, had been the basis of the betrothal and the wedding, and the wedding had been postponed until the last practicable moment prior to their departure for the West. Could you imagine Sir Galahad and Joan of Arc uniting in wedlock in order jointly to pursue the quest of the Holy Grail, you would have a fair analogy of the terms on which the Whitmans became man and wife.

Marcus Whitman was the Galahad type, a man "whose strength was as the strength of ten because his heart was pure." A man of magnificent physical powers, of tremendous energy, of quick and sure decision in action, of noble purpose, and utterly unselfish motives; a man born to be a great commander, a great executive, a great and devoted public servant, but not born to be a missionary to the Indians or the happy associate of other missionaries. The In-

dians were to complain, often and bitterly in later years, that Dr. Whitman never would stop to parley with them. Parley? Marcus Whitman never understood the meaning of the word. Talk took time, and Marcus Whitman never had time to do a tenth of the things that were pressing to be done. In the Indian way of life nothing ever was done without long and elaborate parley. Spalding could parley with them, also Eells and the other theologians among the missionaries, but not Whitman. His forte was *action*. Neither the Indians nor his fellow missionaries ever fully understood this trait of Whitman's. In instant response to every call for help, no matter what the weather or the condition of the trails, Whitman was on his horse and away. It was nothing for him to ride a hundred miles to deliver a baby, set a broken bone, or carry medicine to the sick. He did it again and again, and his patients, both red and white, were not unappreciative; but they felt that he ought to do all that and parley too. Naturally an impatient man and accustomed always to drive himself to the point of exhaustion, Whitman could never tolerate the dilatory ways of others. The American Board could not have selected a man less likely to understand the psychology either of Indians or theologians.

Equally alien to the psychology of those with whom her missionary lot was cast was Narcissa Prentiss Whitman. Nature had given her the beauty, the voice, and the intelligence to be a great concert or operatic star; education had given her the culture, the wit, and the readiness of tongue to be the mistress of a distinguished salon; but neither nature nor education had equipped her to understand the primitive mind, or even the commonplace minds of many of her missionary associates. The Indians were to say in later years, and likewise many of her missionary colleagues, that she was haughty. And they were right, from their point of view. Narcissa had dedicated herself to the saving of human souls. She loved to teach people, sing for them, pray for them, and work for them. Without hesitation she would give her life for them. But she hated to have them crowding into her kitchen and living room. She was a refined and fastidious lady who could be at ease only with those of her own kind. Never could she welcome an invasion of her privacy. Nobody had told her back in Angelica, New York—not Samuel Parker, nor Marcus Whitman, nor any of the promoters of missions to the Indians—that when she got to Oregon

there would be no privacy at all for her, ever; that the Indians would feel free to walk into any room of her house at any time, and would resent being excluded; and that a polyglot company of missionaries, settlers, and travellers would daily claim the privilege of hospitality under her roof. Narcissa was to enjoy at Waiilatpu the same kind of privacy she could have had in a New York City tenement. Had she known this in advance, she might have been less attracted to missionary service. But, being Narcissa Prentiss, she probably would have gone anyhow!

Like the characters of a classic Greek tragedy, the Whitmans were to become unwittingly the instruments of their own failure and destruction. In the first place, they misunderstood themselves. Because of their deep religious convictions, they were sure of their ability to succeed under any circumstances. That the very qualities which made them great, which made them stand out in vivid and unforgettable contrast with so many others, would accomplish the defeat of their most cherished purpose was unthinkable and incomprehensible. In the second place, in common with multitudes of others, they were totally mistaken about the American Indian. They took it for granted that the desire of the Flatheads and Nez Perces for the White Man's Book of Heaven reflected the deep spiritual yearning of the untutored savage. How could they realize that the stone-age culture of the Indian made it impossible for him to comprehend the white man's religion? How could they realize that what the Indians actually sought was the secret of the white man's material civilization, his means of gaining power and wealth and possessions? How could Marcus and Narcissa Whitman realize, being what they were, that preaching and teaching, even healing, could not win conversions among the Indians as they did among the people of western New York? How could they realize that the Indians could grasp the white man's religion only as a form of magic, to be valued as such and not as a means of spiritual salvation? They could not even faintly realize these things as they confidently went forth from Angelica in the Spring of 1836. They were never able to realize them as fully as Spalding and some of the other missionaries, though at the end they came to feel that the spiritual regeneration of the Indians would not be possible until they had become settled and civilized.

As the Whitman-Spalding party joined the caravan of the American Fur Company late in May 1836, for the long trek westward, the Whitmans were light of heart despite the toil and hardship already endured and the greater toil and hardship to be seen ahead. They were gay in spirit because they had health and hope and faith, but most of all because somewhere between Angelica, New York, and St. Louis, Missouri, Narcissa Prentiss had fallen overwhelmingly and humanly in love with Marcus Whitman and he with her. The platonic marriage, contracted as a means to an end, had flowered into an ardent love match. Love lightened all burdens, enlivened all experiences, and brought to the surface in both husband and wife a joyous humor. Whitman laughed and joked with the trappers and mountain men, and Narcissa was merrily amused by the tall tales of Tom Fitzpatrick, Jim Bridger, Joe Meek, and the noble Scottish adventurer William Drummond Stewart who accompanied the party to the rendezvous. Marcus and Narcissa were in love and did not care who knew it. Playfully Marcus held her on his knee before the evening camp fires, and she responded in kind.

Good feeling prevailed everywhere save in the heart of Henry Harmon Spalding. For him the love affair of the Whitmans was a painful reminder of the past. Being their pastor, the only man of holy orders in the party, Spalding saw that he had a duty to perform. As their spiritual adviser, he must tell Brother and Sister Whitman, even in the presence of others, that their conduct was unseemly. When it came to performance of spiritual duty Spalding was no shirker. Nor did he mince words. The Whitmans understood him to say that so frivolous a woman as Narcissa was not fit to be the wife of a missionary doctor, and they instantly reacted with indignation and resentment. Diplomatic relations between them and the Spaldings were ruptured and seeds of discord were planted in fertile soil months before the mission could be established.

Narcissa Whitman and Eliza Spalding were the first white women to make the journey overland to Oregon. There had been much difference of opinion as to whether members of the weaker sex could make such a trip. Indian women had been doing it from time out of mind, but they were different. Centuries of outdoor living had hardened them to the hazards and toils of the trail. White

women, it was said, could never stand it. Whitman thought otherwise. His observations on the reconnaissance to Green River and return in 1835 had convinced him that if women could travel by horseback and wagon at all seasons of the year over what passed for roads in western New York they could easily cross the continent during the summer. He was an old hand at the business of getting through, road or no road, in spite of snow or ice, mud or flood. The trails and roads he saw in the West in 1835 did not awe him a bit.

Whitman also believed that he could take a wagon through, and he did take one through as far as Fort Boise. But for lack of time he probably would have taken it clear through to Fort Walla Walla. Mrs. Whitman and Mrs. Spalding found the going rough at times, but in 1836 there would have been equally rough going on a two thousand-mile journey overland anywhere east of the Mississippi. There was small danger at that particular time of being attacked by Indians, and travel with the fur-trade caravan reduced that danger almost to zero. Not only Mrs. Whitman and Mrs. Spalding but all other members of the missionary party got across the plains and mountains not only in safety but in good health. Whitman had proved that travel to Oregon was feasible for anyone who wanted to go.

For this achievement alone Marcus Whitman deserves to be remembered as an important American. Where others doubted and hesitated, Whitman had the practical comprehension, the courage, the initiative, and the tireless durability to take the risk and do the job. It was not so much that he made America more conscious of Oregon, though perhaps he did; but that he made America aware for the first time that Oregon was attainable for any man, woman, or child who could ride a horse, drive a team, or sit in the bed of a wagon. Multitudes of Americans were impatiently waiting for just such tidings. In breaking the path for them, Whitman touched off one of the great migrations of history, and one that profoundly altered the future of the United States.

The crossing of the plains and the mountains proved to be the least of Whitman's difficulties. Far more trying and in the long run more frustrating were the problems of choosing the mission site, developing a mission station, and conducting the mission operations. The first of these had to be faced the moment the missionary party

descended into the Columbia River basin. The logical site for the mission was in the homelands of the Nez Perce Indians. That was where the American Board intended it to be, where the Nez Perces themselves wanted it, and where Whitman and Spalding mutually understood when they left home that it would be located. But things had happened between the Whitmans and the Spaldings since they left home, things that made it impossible for them to live under the same roof or even work together in the same vicinity. So it was agreed between them that Spalding would establish a mission station among the Nez Perces on the Clearwater River, near the present city of Lewiston, Idaho, while Whitman would settle among the Cayuse Indians at the place called Waiilatpu, on the Walla Walla River, about six miles from the present city of Walla Walla, Washington. Thus by stationing themselves a hundred miles apart, they hoped to alleviate the friction which had arisen between them and at the same time broaden the scope of the project.

The friction was not alleviated; cooperation by remote association proved to hold as many possibilities of conflict and misunderstanding as cooperation by direct personal contact. Moreover, the division of resources and labor laid heavier burdens on both Whitman and Spalding than would have been necessary if they could have worked together at the same place. In choosing the location at Waiilatpu Whitman no doubt was influenced by its nearness to the Hudson's Bay Company post called Fort Walla Walla, then situated at the junction of the Walla Walla and the Columbia rivers about thirty miles from Waiilatpu. Whitman had a natural eye for the strategic in matters of transport. He was quick to see that necessary supplies could be more readily and cheaply obtained at a location near the head of river navigation than elsewhere. He could also perceive that future migration to Oregon, of which there was already much talk in the States, would aim for the nearest post on the Columbia River. Since this appeared to be Fort Walla Walla, and since Waiilatpu was situated on the trail following the Walla Walla River from the summit of the Blue Mountains to the Columbia, communication and transportation both eastward and westward would be better there than elsewhere. If there was to be a chain of mission stations throughout the Columbia basin (and such plans were already in mind), Whitman was confident that Waiilatpu was the logical place for the headquarters.

With respect to the Indians, Whitman's judgments were much less acute. He should not have settled among the Cayuses. The Nez Perces warned him that the Cayuses were an intractable tribe who disliked the whites. Whitman disregarded the warning. The Cayuses had said they were willing to have the white doctor settle among them, and were eager to know about his religion and enjoy the benefits of his medicine. Whitman believed them. Perhaps he was right in believing them. Perhaps he might have won them over, despite his temperamental inability to understand the native culture and psychology, had not the great tide of migration on the Oregon Trail immediately poured in upon the Cayuses and convinced them that no white man could be a true friend of the Indian. Perhaps, if circumstances had not forced the Whitmans to minister so largely to the needs of train upon train of emigrants, the Cayuses eventually might have understood and appreciated what the Whitmans were trying to do for them. But this was not to be. When he opened the road to Oregon for the restless hordes of landseekers, Marcus Whitman helped set in motion forces destined to frustrate all his missionary labors and inflame the Indians to murderous assault upon him and his beloved wife.

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The tasks which confronted the Whitmans at Waiilatpu were stupendous. The labors they performed are unbelievable. On October 6, 1836, when Whitman looked over the ground and selected the site for his first building, there was nothing to be seen on the whole tract but tall rye grass bordered with cottonwoods and alders on the banks of the two streams. Ten years later on the same site were thirty acres of farm land, fully cultivated and under irrigation; a bearing orchard of 75 fruit trees; a sawmill with 40,000 feet of lumber, cut and stacked for use; a flour mill and a granary; a blacksmith shop, fully equipped; two large dwelling houses, comfortably built and furnished; several barns and sheds for livestock; a large accumulation of farming tools and machinery, including a threshing machine, a corn sheller, and 25 plows; 290 head of cattle, 46 head of horses, and 92 head of sheep; and, in addition to all of this, the inventory included large quantities of wearing apparel, medicines, surgical instruments, books, and school supplies. The

value of the property as reported to the American Board was $21,583.26—the equivalent, perhaps, of $200,000 at present price levels. All this Marcus and Narcissa Whitman had created out of nothing *in ten years*. They had created it in the wilderness, so far from civilization that outside help and outside supplies and equipment took months to reach them. They had created it while learning the Indian languages, while trying to compile a dictionary and grammar of the Indian tongues, while conducting a school, while carrying on Sunday and weekly religious services, while operating a medical dispensary, while Dr. Whitman was on call for surgical and medical services anywhere within a radius of two hundred miles, and while he kept accounts, wrote letters and attended to myriad details of farming and business. However much they may have failed in their intangible creations, their tangible creation was magnificent. Every emigrant who came through could see it and spread the word back home that the fattest livestock he ever saw, the heaviest yield of potatoes, the finest stand of wheat, the tallest corn, the sweetest melons, and so on were at Dr. Whitman's mission station out on the Oregon Trail. Dr. Whitman had demonstrated, not only that the common man and his family could make it through to Oregon, but could start with nothing and in a little while be rich. So they passed the word along: *If you don't believe it, come on to Oregon and see for yourself.* And thousands did!

Things material multiplied like magic under Dr. Whitman's hand, but not conversions among the Indians. With all their labors of exhortation the Whitmans made only about a dozen converts. The Cayuses were not a malleable people, and the Whitmans were not adept in their approach to the primitive mind. Only with their school did they get good results. Mrs. Whitman was a teacher by profession and loved her work. Dr. Whitman had received a fairly good classical training prior to his medical education. Both had unlimited faith in the power of education, and in 1837 they established a school at Waiilatpu—the first American school, perhaps the first formal school of any kind, in the vast inland basin of the Columbia. Mrs. Whitman did most of the teaching, though the Doctor was pleased to take a hand when he had time. At one time they had over a hundred Indians on the school roll, and the average daily attendance was around twenty-five. Although the school pro-

duced few converts to Christianity, it did provide a good rudimentary education for scores of Indian and half-breed children. The natives seemed to love the school exercises, even though their attendance was irregular. Down to the very day of the Massacre, the school was carried on with goodly numbers in attendance. It was the one activity of the Whitman Mission with which no person ever found fault.

Richer spiritual harvests might have been reaped at Waiilatpu had there been any way to alleviate the feeling between the Whitmans and the Spaldings. This injected itself into every question that arose regarding the conduct of mission affairs. Not only were the Whitmans and the Spaldings involved, but to some degree all of their missionary co-laborers. The rejected suitor of Narcissa Prentiss could forgive, and freely did, many times in humble prayer; but to be uncritical of what the Whitmans did, especially Narcissa, was quite beyond his power. After all he was a preacher, and criticism, he thought, was his duty and his right. The mission became a house divided. At every meeting dissension ran rife, little things were magnified, and questions of policy were considered not on principle but on personal grounds. Finally, in 1842, came the showdown.

The American Board had been receiving many complaints about Spalding, some from the Whitmans and some from other members of the mission organization. After duly weighing these complaints the Board issued an order dismissing Spalding and directing that the stations at Waiilatpu and Lapwai (the Whitman and Spalding stations) be discontinued and all future missionary work be carried on from Tshimakain on the Spokane River, where Cushing Eells was in charge. This order reached Waiilatpu on September 14, 1842. Unaware, however, of the issuance of the order (which was dated February 25, 1842) the members of the mission had met at Waiilatpu in June and made another effort to compose their differences. This time they were sure they had succeeded. The order of the Board upset everything on which agreement had been reached; moreover, it required the closing of the two most flourishing stations of the mission. A hurried consultation was held, and, on September 28, Whitman, ever the man of action, proposed that he leave at once for the East to confer with the members of the Ameri-

can Board. This proposal was quickly approved, and Whitman started his journey on October 3, 1842.

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Such is the documented background of Whitman's historic mid-winter ride across the continent. His major purpose undoubtedly was to persuade the Board to rescind its order. Did he have other purposes as well? On May 12, 1842, he had written the American Board reporting information he had received regarding a proposed emigration to Oregon in 1843. The emigration of 1842 had consisted of 114 persons, and the facilities of Waiilatpu had been heavily taxed by their requests for supplies and assistance. If Waiilatpu should be closed, there would be no way station for American emigrants between Fort Boise and the Willamette Valley. Was the Board aware of this? Did it have any policy respecting emigrants? Were he successful in persuading the Board to continue the Waiilatpu station, Whitman certainly would need definite instructions on the matter of service to emigrants. That must have been one of the secondary purposes of his ride, for we know that he did discuss with members of the Board "the wave of white population that is rolling westward."

Another secondary purpose which must have had a place in Whitman's thoughts as he galloped eastward was the need of fuller and more authentic information about the political future of Oregon. Dr. Elijah White, the leader of the emigration of 1842, had told him of the failure of the Webster-Ashburton Treaty to settle the Oregon question, and had also told him of the Linn Bill, not yet enacted into law, which promised a section of land to every American settler in Oregon. Beyond these bare facts Whitman knew nothing of what was going on in diplomatic and legislative circles. And it was vital that he should know. How could he intelligently discuss the future of Waiilatpu with members of the Board without some idea of whether the country was going to be British or American? If it should go British, there would be no wave of white population passing through Waiilatpu. Perhaps there would be no justification for the continuance of the mission at all. But if it should go American, Waiilatpu was a strategic point from every consideration.

History has been lavish in praise of Whitman's ride. It was a magnificent feat—one that a Kit Carson or a Jim Bridger would not have undertaken lightly. It required much more than bravery; it required a know-how that only the greatest of scouts and mountain men possessed. But Whitman was fully equal to the task. His whole life had been a preparation for just such duty. Midwinter riding was no new thing to him. In ten years of medical practice he had traversed the terrible roads of western New York in weather as severe as anything he would encounter in the Rocky Mountains, and in six years at Waiilatpu he had mastered the worst that Indian trails and mountain blizzards could dish out. He knew he could make it through. For sixteen years it had been his business to make it through despite all odds, and this was a business that Marcus Whitman knew as well as any man alive.

Whitman reached St. Louis not later than March 3, 1843, and thence proceeded up the Ohio River to Cincinnati. But instead of going straight on to Boston where the head office of the American Board was located, he turned aside and went to Washington, D. C., reaching the Nation's capital on or before March 23. There has been much speculation as to why Whitman went to Washington and what he did there. As to why he went to Washington, I can see no reason for wonder. He went, as you and I and countless other Americans have often had to do, in quest of information. There were things he felt he had to know, and Washington, then as now, was the place to get the lowdown. In Washington, then as now, if you could see the right people, you could get a line on things to come. And Whitman knew some of the right people. He went straight to John C. Spencer, the Secretary of the Treasury, who, until two weeks before, had been the Secretary of War. Spencer was an old New York friend and neighbor who lived only ten miles from Whitman's home town. An old friend in high official circles is always the person one tries to see when he goes to Washington for information. Even as you and I, Whitman knew that simple rule of politics.

What Spencer and Whitman talked about nobody knows—of shoes and ships and sealing wax, perhaps; and perhaps of other things. If they did not talk of Oregon and the Oregon question, they were strange friends indeed, seeing that one had just arrived from

Oregon still wearing his buckskins and his trail-grown beard, and the other had lately headed one of the two executive departments most immediately interested in the Oregon question. There is documentary proof that Whitman also talked with the new Secretary of War, James M. Porter. This talk probably was arranged through the good offices of Spencer, but no one knows why or what was said. Hearsay evidence credits Whitman with additional official contacts and conversations, including Daniel Webster, then Secretary of State, and President John Tyler. The hearsay evidence could be true, but probably is not. Spencer and Porter could supply all the information Whitman wanted; there was no need for him to go higher, and as usual he was in a great hurry. No doubt he stated his own views on the Oregon question to Spencer and Porter—it would not have been like Whitman to be reticent on such a matter—but he depended on them to pass the word upward. He obviously was not in Washington for pressure purposes or he would have stayed longer than two days.

Whitman went from Washington to New York, where he called on several people including Horace Greeley, who made him the subject of an editorial in the *New York Tribune*. He spent two days in New York and then took the boat for Boston. At the offices of the American Board he got a cool reception and was rebuked for leaving his station without permission. At first the Board refused to reconsider the order closing the Lapwai and Waiilatpu stations, but the persistent arguments of Dr. Whitman finally won them over. He was instructed to return to Waiilatpu and go on as before. Already aware of the plans for the great migration of 1843, Whitman made preparations to go west with the emigrant train. It is not of record that he had a large part in the promotion of the emigration of 1843, but the surviving letters, diaries, and other papers of many members of that emigration give proof that he was a tower of strength on the journey westward. He was familiar with the trail and knew how to cope with all of its emergencies. Moreover, his medical attentions alleviated many ills and pains, and are credited with saving several lives. When Captain Grant at Fort Hall advised the emigrants to abandon their cattle and wagons, Whitman contended that they could be taken through to Oregon. When his

view prevailed, Whitman with his usual indomitable energy went to work at the job of helping everyone get his cattle and wagons over the trail.

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Four years remained to the Whitmans after the return to Waiilatpu in October 1843. They were busy years but not happy ones. There had been little happiness for them since the accidental drowning of their two-year old daughter in June 1839. Both suffered considerable deterioration of health, and this was accompanied by growing mental depression. The Spalding problem seemed to be solved, and likewise, with the settlement of the Oregon boundary question, the problem of what to do about the emigrants. But now arose the more baffling problem of what to do about the growing hostility of the Cayuse Indians. More than one cause accounted for the increasing enmity of the Indians, and they were not causes the Whitmans could remove or counteract. The ever-rising flood of emigrants convinced the already suspicious Cayuses that they were doomed to be dispossessed of their ancestral lands, and that right soon. Hundreds of emigrants stopped at Waiilatpu where they received supplies and other assistance from the Whitmans. With this daily evidence before their eyes, nothing Whitman could say to the Indians and nothing he could do for them could allay their fears. It seemed obvious to them that he was in league with the settlers, even to the extent of practicing black magic against the whole Cayuse population.

This latter idea sprang from perfectly logical deductions. Prior to the coming of the whites in large numbers Dr. Whitman had been highly successful in curing the ailments of the Indians. But when hordes of whites of all ages and conditions arrived in Oregon they brought with them a number of endemic diseases, particularly measles and dysentery, which were new to the Indian population. Generations of natural selection had built among the whites a high resistance to these afflictions, but the Indians had acquired no such racial immunity. The whites usually made a quick and easy recovery, whereas the Indians died in great numbers. It seemed clear and conclusive to the stone-age mind that the white doctor was making good medicine for his own people and lethal medicine for the red-

skins. By tribal law and custom a medicine man who practiced such evil magic must be slain. It was the only way to stay his hand and safeguard the welfare of the tribe. The Cayuse chiefs took counsel together on the matter and decided that this tribal law of self-preservation must be applied to Dr. and Mrs. Whitman. They must be killed before they could complete their diabolical plan of decimating the Cayuse tribe.

The Whitmans were fully aware of the menace which hung over them, but did not clearly understand the reasons for it. Nor did they correctly measure the implacability of the Cayuse leaders. To the last the Whitmans continued to hope and believe that somehow violence could be averted. Several times before there had been threats and demonstrations, but patience and firmness apparently had cooled the ire of the Indians in time to forestall an attack. Perhaps it would happen again. This wishful thinking was no doubt heightened by the realization that the only other alternative was to evacuate the Waiilatpu station and seek safety elsewhere. But where? Seventy-two persons in addition to Dr. and Mrs. Whitman were then living at Waiilatpu. Where could so large a group find sanctuary? Not at Lapwai or Tshimakain; not anywhere nearer than the Willamette Valley. To move seventy-four people bag and baggage to the Willamette Valley was no easy undertaking. The Indians, if they chose to attack, could make it impossible. The choice was to evacuate the mission and take the chance of being waylaid *en route* or to sit tight at Waiilatpu and take the chance of being attacked there. From all angles the latter appeared to be the better risk. It was also certain that the evacuation of Waiilatpu would be followed in the looting and destruction of the most valuable property of the American Board in Oregon. Whitman felt that is was his duty to protect and preserve this indispensable asset. So he decided to stay. Knowing that there was danger, he took every reasonable precaution save that of barring the Indians from access to the mission grounds. That he feared would create so much resentment that an immediate attack would be precipitated.

On November 29, 1847, about two o'clock in the afternoon, two Indians came through the kitchen of the mission to the door of the living room and asked for medicine. Dr. Whitman refused them admission to the living room, but took his medicines and went to

the kitchen with them. Some words passed between the Indians and the Doctor; then one of them managed to gain his attention while the other tomahawked him from behind. Whitman struggled to escape and managed to get out into the yard before he fell. The noise of the struggle brought Mrs. Whitman and others to the assistance of the Doctor. Then the Indians began shooting. The butchery lasted nearly two days, but Mrs. Whitman was the only woman slain by the Indians. Eleven men in addition to Dr. Whitman were killed, and two children died from illness or exposure. Six persons managed to escape, a few were released; but five men, eight women, and thirty-four children were taken captive by the Indians. A few days later the Indians allowed Joe Stanfield, one of the captives, to dig a shallow grave at the edge of the old Indian cemetery north of the mission house; then the bodies of all of the victims were tossed into this common grave and lightly covered with earth. This was the end.

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The Whitman Massacre put a stop to missionary work and to white settlement in the region east of the Cascades for upwards of a decade. The American Board closed its three mission stations in the Columbia basin and removed the workers to other posts. Although the tide of migration to Oregon continued, few tarried in the interior. Punitive expeditions were sent to subdue the Indians and bring the perpetrators of the Massacre to justice, but there were not enough troops to render the country safe for settlement, so the military authorities declared the interior closed until further notice. The country was now under American jurisdiction, but Congress was slow in setting up a territorial government and the Army had few troops to spare for patrol duty in the upper Columbia region.

Gradually the picture changed. Territorial government for Oregon was established in 1848; for Washington in 1853. More troops were sent in and the hostile tribes were dispersed. Meanwhile the great gold discoveries in California had diverted the stream of migration southward. But there were scores of prospectors, both successful and unsuccessful, who believed that the mountains of the Northwest were just as rich in gold as those of California. Despite the closing of the country to settlement, prospecting parties began to

make their way up the Columbia and to the mountains of the interior. Several sensational strikes were made and this brought pressure for the reopening of the country for settlement, and this was done early in the Year 1859. Thousands set forth at once for the new diggings, and the Walla Walla country again resounded with the hum of advancing civilization.

One of those who came for a look around in the Summer of 1859 was an oldtimer, a veteran of the caravan of '38. He was Cushing Eells, the missionary who had come out in 1838 to be associated with Whitman and Spalding and had been put in charge of the station of Tshimakain on the Spokane River. The Indian outbreaks following the Whitman Massacre had forced him to remove to the Willamette Valley where he had taken up the career of a teacher. Now he was returning to the upper country for a visit and to look over the abandoned mission properties of the American Board. When he reached Waiilatpu he saw at once that a new era was opening for the interior country. Fort Walla Walla had been removed from the junction of the Walla Walla and the Columbia rivers to a site six miles east of Waiilatpu. In the environs of the fort a thriving village was rising. It was apparent that there would be a large and rapid growth of population in this area.

The mission grounds were desolate and in ruins, the Whitman grave neglected and overgrown with weeds. As Cushing Eells stood by the unkept grave many memories crowded upon him—memories of the vivid and unforgettable personalities of Dr. and Mrs. Whitman, memories of their toils and difficulties, memories of the many times Dr. Whitman had ridden the long, hard trail to Tshimakain to give medical aid to the Eells family, memories of the great days on the Oregon Trail and Whitman's participation in those historic events, but most of all memories of the school the Whitmans had conducted at Waiilatpu, the work in which both had achieved the greatest happiness and success, the one operation of the Waiilatpu Mission with which no fault had ever been found. A teacher himself for the past twelve years, Eells now could understand better than ever before the devotion of the Whitmans to their school and the significance of education in the future of the Pacific Northwest. Musing there at the side of the great and historic grave, Cushing Eells was seized with an idea which he ever regarded as an

inspiration from on high. There should be a fitting memorial for the Whitmans, and what could be more to their own liking and more to the service of mankind than an institution of learning named after the Whitmans and located on the site of the Waiilatpu Mission?

Immediately upon his return to the Willamette Valley, Cushing Eells went to work on his Whitman Memorial project. He wrote to the Home Missionary Society of the Congregational Church requesting assignment to the Walla Walla area as a missionary preacher. He also wrote to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions proposing to purchase the Whitman Mission property on the understanding that he would give one-half of it to found a school in memory of the Whitmans. Then he applied to the legislature of the Territory of Washington for a charter of incorporation for an institution of learning to be named the Whitman Seminary. The American Board accepted the Eells offer almost by return mail, and the territorial legislature enacted the charter for the Whitman Seminary on December 30, 1859, but the Home Missionary Society could not help by giving Eells a job near Waiilatpu. Eells thereupon decided to make the project finance itself. He concluded the deal with the American Board, moved to the Waiilatpu property, and began farming it. In two years he had succeeded in paying off the American Board and accumulating a little money for starting the Seminary. During the week he was a farmer, but nearly every Sunday he served as a volunteer preacher somewhere in the vicinity, and in connection with almost every sermon he made an appeal for the support of the Whitman Seminary.

The first meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Whitman Seminary was held on December 17, 1860. Although there was not enough money on hand to open the institution at once, Cushing Eells was named President of the Board and authorized to proceed as rapidly as money could be obtained. In 1863 he was able to add to his log dwelling at Waiilatpu a room sixteen feet square, a room large enough to hold classes in. On December 3, 1863, the first term of the Whitman Seminary was opened in this room. Thirteen pupils were in attendance, and the instruction was offered by Edwin Eells, a son of Cushing Eells, born at Tshimakain on July 21, 1842,

attending physician Dr. Marcus Whitman. This term of the Seminary lasted three months and was the only session ever held on the mission grounds.

The first sesssion proved that good attendance could not be secured at Waiilatpu; it was too far from the population center of the area. Reluctantly, Cushing Eells made the inevitable decision—to move the Seminary to the nearby and booming city of Walla Walla. This decision was made in 1864, but it took two years to secure a suitable site in Walla Walla and raise the money for the erection of a school building. In May 1866, Dr. Dorsey S. Baker, a leading citizen of Walla Walla, gave the Seminary a tract of four acres in the eastern portion of Walla Walla; Cushing Eells, true to his promise to the American Board, gave $2,000 toward the cost of the building and an additional sum of $1,200 was secured by popular subscription. In the summer of 1866 a two-story frame building was erected, the first on the present Whitman campus, and on October 15, 1866, the Seminary was again opened for instruction. The Whitman Memorial was a reality at last.

The life-span of the Whitman Seminary was not to be long. It lacked the financial resources to provide adequate facilities or employ enough teachers. Yet it managed somehow to survive. Cushing Eells paid the deficits from his own purse and raised whatever sums the institution received in addition to its tuition fees. The Trustees finally decided that they must either close the Seminary or develop it into a strong institution of full collegiate grade. For a long time it seemed that the latter alternative would be impossible of realization, but there was a better fate in store for the Whitman Memorial than the Whitman Mission.

In the Autumn of 1881, Dr. George H. Atkinson, a Trustee of the Seminary and then Superintendent of Home Missions for the Congregational Churches of Oregon, was in Walla Walla attending the territorial institute for teachers. Likewise in Walla Walla to attend the institute was Dr. Alexander J. Anderson of Seattle, then in his fifth year as President of the Territorial University of Washington. The two men fell into conversation about the future of education in the West and about the predicament of the Whitman Seminary in particular. Dr. Anderson said that, owing to ill effects of the moist climate west of the Cascades on his wife's health, he

would like to move to the interior, but there was no educational position available for him there. Dr. Atkinson suggested that he accept the principalship of the Whitman Seminary, but Anderson did not want to step down from a university presidency to an academy principalship. However, he assured Atkinson that, if the Seminary Trustees would reorganize the institution as a college, he would accept the presidency and devote himself unreservedly to the upbuilding of the new institution.

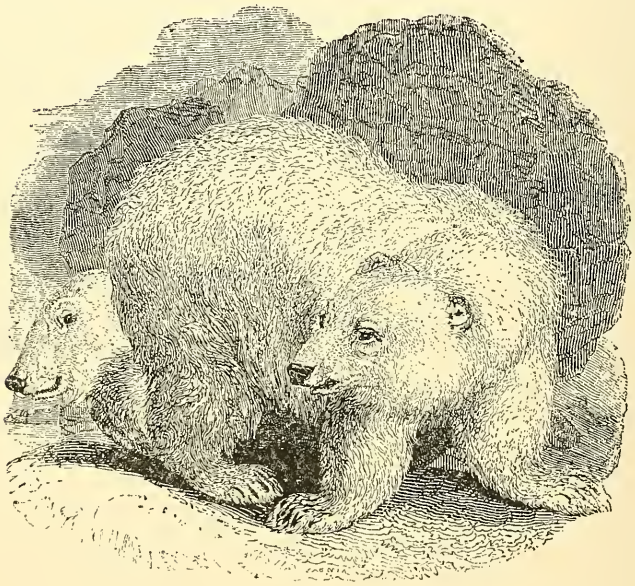
Atkinson at once put the matter before the Trustees of the Seminary, and they agreed to Dr. Anderson's proposal. The legislature was asked to amend the charter of 1859 to provide for a collegiate institution, and the Trustees undertook to raise the funds to provide the necessary faculty and facilities. Both of these undertakings were successful, and on September 4 (*Marcus Whitman's birthday*), 1882, the first collegiate session opened with a faculty of three and a collegiate registration of sixty. This was the beginning of Whitman College but not the end of the Whitman Seminary. Under the name of the Whitman Academy and later as Pearsons Academy, the seminary program of instruction was continued on the same campus with the College until 1912.

Under the leadership of Alexander J. Anderson, Whitman College made splendid progress. Its financial resources were increased, its plant enlarged, its faculty strengthened, and its curriculum raised to the best academic standards of the time. Ill health forced the resignation of President Anderson in 1891, and for a time thereafter the College suffered a serious setback. A grave financial panic swept over the United States in the Years 1892 and 1893, and Whitman College, bereft of the able and experienced direction of President Anderson, almost went down in the storm. But in 1894 the Trustees found a helmsman equal to the need! Stephen B. L. Penrose, a young Congregational minister then serving the church at Dayton, Washington, was persuaded to accept the presidency of the tottering college. The work that President Penrose did in his forty years as the head of Whitman College is one of the fabulous achievements of American Education. Not only did he rescue a dying college from extinction; he transformed a tiny, unknown, and provincial school into a college of national and international repute. Cushing Eells had dreamed of a living

memorial for Marcus and Narcissa Whitman at Waiilatpu; Stephen B. L. Penrose created a Whitman Memorial transcending time and place, a memorial which lives, as Marcus and Narcissa Whitman lived, *in total dedication* to the service of Mankind.

THE END

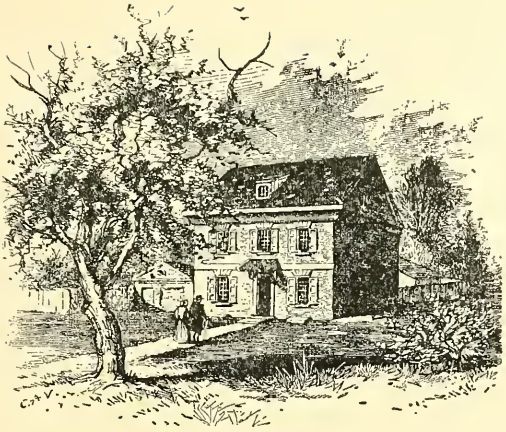
"*Actorum Memores simul affectamus Agenda!*"



THIS NEWCOMEN ADDRESS, *dealing with the life and times and extraordinary deeds of* MARCUS WHITMAN (1802-1847) *and with the early history of Whitman College in the State of Washington, was delivered at the "1950 Inland Empire Dinner" of The Newcomen Society of England, held at Spokane, Washington, U.S.A., on June 9, 1950.* PRESIDENT MAXEY, *the guest of honor, was introduced by* DR. JOEL E. FERRIS *of Spokane, Chairman of Advisory Board, Spokane and Eastern Division, Seattle-First National Bank: Vice-Chairman, Inland Empire Committee, in American Newcomen. The dinner was presided over by* DR. STANLY A. EASTON *of Idaho, President, Bunker Hill and Sullivan Mining & Concentrating Company, Kellogg, Idaho; member of the Board of Overseers, Whitman College; Chairman of the Inland Empire Committee, in The Newcomen Society of England.*

"There has been no other couple like the Whitmans in American history—no wooing more strange, no wedding more extraordinary, no marriage more proof against stress and storm, no union of purpose and effort more perfect, no failure more pathetic, no ending more terrible, and no immortality more sublime than theirs. Forces they did not control or understand brought their lives together in a noble enterprise that failed; forces they did not control or understand brought their lives to a dire and agonizing close; yet so greatly did they live, so magnificently did they labor and serve that forces they set in motion will forever enrich the civilization they helped to plant on the western slopes of the Continental Divide."

—Chester Collins Maxey



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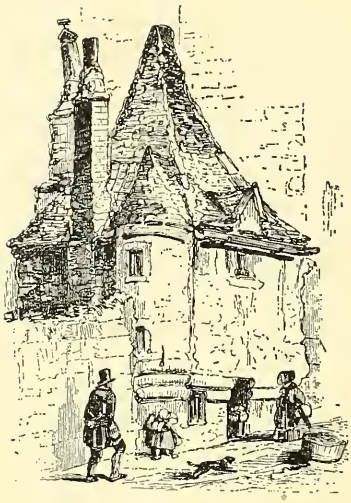

American Newcomen, *interested always in the history of important educational institutions and in the doings of pioneers of courage whose influence has lived long after them, takes satisfaction in this brilliant, dramatic, and infinitely colorful Newcomen manuscript which pays tribute to the memory of a great American pioneer of the Pacific Northwest:* Marcus Whitman (1802-1847). *The seat of learning at Walla Walla, Washington, U.S.A., reared in his memory,* Whitman College, *is truly a monument to him and to his manifold contributions to America! Indeed the story unfolded within the pages that have preceded may serve as an inspiration to America of today!*

THE NEWCOMEN SOCIETY OF ENGLAND

IN NORTH AMERICA

BROADLY, *this British Society has as its purposes: to increase an appreciation of American-British traditions and ideals in the Arts and Sciences, especially in that bond of sympathy for the cultural and spiritual forces which are common to the two countries; and, secondly, to serve as another link in the intimately friendly relations existing between Great Britain and the United States of America.*

The Newcomen Society centers its work in the history of Material Civilization, the history of: Industry, Invention, Engineering, Transportation, the Utilities, Communication, Mining, Agriculture, Finance, Banking, Economics, Education, and the Law—these and correlated historical fields. In short, the background of those factors which have contributed or are contributing to the progress of Mankind.

The best of British traditions, British scholarship, and British ideals stand back of this honorary society, whose headquarters are at London. Its name perpetuates the life and work of Thomas Newcomen (1663-1729), the British pioneer, whose valuable contributions in improvements to the newly invented Steam Engine brought him lasting fame in the field of the Mechanic Arts. The Newcomen Engines, whose period of use was from 1712 to 1775, paved a way for the Industrial Revolution. Newcomen's inventive genius preceded by more than 50 years the brilliant work in Steam by the world-famous James Watt.

"The roads you travel so briskly
lead out of dim antiquity,
and you study the past chiefly because
of its bearing on the living present
and its promise for the future."

—LIEUTENANT GENERAL JAMES G. HARBORD,
K.C.M.G., D.S.M., LL.D., U.S. ARMY (RET.)

(1866-1947)

Late American Member of Council at London
The Newcomen Society of England

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